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Miscellanea.

THE recently published Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites concerning the Introduction of the Cause of those who suffered death in the religious persecutions raging in Ireland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must surely bring a thrill of joy and satisfaction to every Irish Catholic heart, as it is a further step towards the consummation we all hope and pray for—their elevation to the honours of the altar. And the very first words of the

Decree will have been read by their countrymen with pardonable pride—"Ireland, Nursing Mother of Heroes"! What a glorious and enviable title! The heroes with whom the Decree deals number two hundred and fifty-seven, representing nearly every rank and condition of life: archbishops and bishops, priests and clerics both secular and regular, laymen of all classes, nobles and common folk, women. Yet these are but a small proportion of the multitude, called "countless" in the Decree, who met their Calvary in those dark days when the desperate attempt was made to wrest the treasured jewel of the Faith from the heart of Ireland. As has been pointed out in a letter of His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, the document lately issued is far from being a Decree of Beatification; nor does it give us the right to speak of the servants of God mentioned in it, without qualification, as martyrs, or to offer them religious veneration of any public kind. Anything of this nature could merely hinder and not help the progress of their Cause. Still we may congratulate ourselves and rejoice that the long preliminary proceedings are at an end and that the Cause has at length been officially introduced: and we can pray, too, that God may soon glorify His servants on earth and may give us the consolation of seeing their names one day enrolled in the catalogue of the saints.

* * * * * * *

The circumstances in which those heroes laid down their lives were a foul blot on Christian civilization which men had fondly thought could never be repeated. Our own days have taught us better. In his famous Christmas pastoral Cardinal Mercier gave the names of thirteen priests or religious of his diocese slaughtered in cold blood by the invaders of Belgium. Of another he said: "We have reason to believe that the parish priest of Hérent, Van Bladel, an old man of seventy-one, was also killed: until now, however, his body has not been found." Since then it has been found, accidentally, buried in a pit with other corpses in the square opposite the Louvain railway station: the breast, on which lay his scapular and medal of the Blessed Virgin, torn open by the bullets of his murderers. His funeral obsequies were celebrated in March in his parish of Hérent, where he found his final resting place, six months after his death. And one of the most touching discourses we have ever read was the sermon which Cardinal Mercier preached on that occasion. The priest had gone out to beg the enemy to spare the lives of his innocent parishioners—that was his sole crime. "Father Van Bladel," said His Eminence, "fell a victim to his charity, to his defence of justice. He can and ought to be venerated as a confessor of the faith, as a protector and intermediary with the Judge of the living and the dead. In the early days of Christianity the martyrs and confessors

were especially venerated by the faithful. Their names were inscribed upon a roll of honour and read publicly in the churches: to-day you find such names in the Canon of the Mass, before and after the Consecration. Holy Church granted great sinners remission of their sins through the intercession of these heroic confessors. Well, you have henceforth, yourselves, a hero whose name is inscribed in letters of gold in your archives. Pray to him, invoke him: he has power before the throne of God's justice, and be assured that none of you will implore his assistance in vain."

* * * * * * *

Then the Cardinal went on to recall to the parishioners the circumstances of the heroic priest's death. "To-day we celebrate the feast of the martyr, Charles the Good, who, as history tells, was killed at Bruges in the cause of justice, in the exercise of piety and charity. Is he not the exemplar of your late beloved pastor, who was known far and wide for his devotion to duty and regarded by his colleagues in the ministry as a saintly priest? He gave you proof of his love for you, his devotion to your spiritual and moral interests, for three-and-thirty years. It was for love of you that he went with his curate to meet the soldiers of the invader, that he bowed his head respectfully before them, even went on his knees in their presence, begging and praying—not for himself, but that the army might spare his dear parish, might hold their hands from dealing out fire and destruction to your houses, and death to your bodies. His presbytery and his garden were your refuge, while he was seized and dragged away to Louvain, from Louvain to Rotselaer, from Rotselaer to Wesemael, from Wesemael through Putkapel and Wilsele, back again to Louvain, where he passed the whole night standing and in suffering, until the terrible moment, when, after a Calvary of three days, crying with a loud voice, 'Injustice! Injustice!' he was haled by four soldiers to the place of his martyrdom." The days of the martyrs are not past. And what Belgium has been suffering lately gives us some notion of what our own people went through in the black days which produced that roll of honour of two hundred and fifty-seven names.

* * * * * * *

Many persons find a consolation in looking forward to the good results which Divine Providence may bring even out of the evils and horrors of the war. One of the most unexpected, perhaps, though not without its appearance of reality, is the impetus which, some think, may be given through it to the conversion of England to the Catholic faith. A well-known French Catholic review writes as follows:—"For some time there has been remarked among the English officers and soldiers of the expeditionary force a movement towards Catholicism

which is somewhat analogous, though it is less intense than that which is noticed in the French army, and is probably to some extent a consequence of it. Living for several months among the fervently Catholic people of Flanders and the north of France, witnessing the prodigies of valour accomplished daily by French priests, whether as soldiers, chaplains or ambulance attendants: edified by the devotion and zeal of the Catholic military chaplains, and by the piety and good humour of their Irish comrades, English soldiers have begun to frequent the churches, to assist at Mass, and to make a multitude of inquiries about a religion which has attracted their hearts and appealed to their imagination. There is a growing conviction that when the war is over a great number of British officers and soldiers will ask admission into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Many will not even wait till then, for I have heard of a certain number of conversions, and I think I am guilty of no indiscretion in saying that on February 11th a young captain of an English regiment was received into the Church at Nantes, in the chapel of Our Lady of Consolation, by a Jesuit Father."

* * * * * * *

Not the least consoling aspect of the war, with all its brutalities and excesses, is the great number of instances of truly Christian heroism and self-sacrifice which it has furnished. France, where Christianity seemed at rather low ebb before the outbreak of hostilities, has been singularly prolific of these. It would be difficult to match, perhaps, for religious beauty and tenderness the story told of the death of the Comte de Robien, a well-known French Catholic and cousin of Archbishop Doulcet, C.P., details of which have only lately reached us. The count, a retired officer of nearly sixty years of age, rejoined his regiment on the outbreak of the war and was at first employed in some non-combatant capacity. But seeing the peril run by France in the fearful struggle, the thought came to him that the war was in some sense a divine chastisement for the sins of his country and that God desired victims of expiation. He begged his military superiors to transfer him to the 1st Zouaves, then engaged in the most exposed and dangerous position in the French lines. His petition granted, he wrote to his wife and son telling them that he had offered his life to Almighty God as a victim of expiation for the sins of France—adding that his only fear was his own unworthiness of such an honour. He achieved such distinction in the field as a leader of his men that in three weeks he was promoted officer of the Legion of Honour and raised to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. His popularity among his men, all whose hardships and privations he shared to the fullest, was boundless, and less popularity than personal love. He had begged of

God, as a sign that his sacrifice was accepted, that he might die in action and on a feast day. And there is little doubt that the sign was given: for as he led his men to the assault on the feast of the Epiphany, a shell struck him full in the chest and he was killed instantaneously. It was the feast on which the Magi had offered their treasures at the feet of the Divine Infant: God had accepted the nobler offering of a life always marked by a rare beauty and devotion. "The perfect type of a Christian knight" his general and the bishop of his diocese have agreed in calling him. "Such examples," said René Bazin on hearing of his death, "are a power." And surely no one can doubt of the coming regeneration of France while there are left in that unhappy country souls that can rise to such heights of heroism.

Thanks.

To the Editor of THE CROSS.

Reverend Dear Sir,—Please allow me space to thank you for the goodly supply of mittens I have received in response to the appeal which you kindly published in THE CROSS on behalf of the Serbian soldiers. Contributions have reached me from Holland as well as from Ireland and England. One generous lady came in person from Ealing, bringing a munificent consignment of woolies of all descriptions, including mittens. By the time the cold weather begins I hope to have the desired number. May our brave soldiers wear them in peace and not in war! They will, in either contingency, be grateful to the kind Irish donors.—Yours sincerely,

ELISABETH CHRISTITCH.

April 20.

The Owner of Sorreston Hall

"Transit gloria mundi, fides Catholica manet."

By Felicia Curtis.

Author of "Under the Rose," "In the Lean Years," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

JEMIMA ground her elbows into the unevenness of the wall running along the rocks, and felt all the better for hurting herself by so doing. After reading aloud two columns and a half of a sensational—sensations being of sorts—serial in the "Daily Cackler," a duty she performed every morning of her existence, Jemima's feelings towards her fellow-creatures—especially towards those who write serials for halfpenny dailies—were simply murderous.

The sun had tanned the girl into a fine brown, she being one of those fortunate persons who ripen like a Catharine pear in the sunshine, instead of reddening and blistering as less lucky mortals do. The soft, warm wind blew little tangles of dark brown hair into her eyes and by degrees blew away the irritation and weariness produced by the recital of the emotions experienced by the "azure-eyed, golden-haired" idiot, the heroine of the story, upon meeting her "affinity," a gentleman of the well-known type—seldom encountered by ordinary mortals—the "Greek god."

"How a really clever man like father can sit and listen to such drivel—and like it—passes my comprehension!" said the girl to herself for the hundredth time.

Down below her at some distance among the white and scarlet geraniums that grew among the rocks sat a man in a black soutane—or rather in a soutane that had once been black—reading his office. Not that Jemima had any idea of what he was reading, but she envied him for reading anything that was not "Daily Cackler."

Far away, along the road running along the bay, Jemima could see a grey speck, momentarily growing larger; it was her brother Leo. She roused herself, and went down among the boulders and sweet-smelling herbs and grasses that rioted everywhere in bountiful profusion, to meet him.

The priest, roused by her passing, looked after the tall, lithe young figure in the grey tweed skirt and white blouse, and sighed a little to himself, then turned the sigh into a prayer, which was the best thing to do. Jemima would have been equally surprised by either, herself being the subject thereof.

From the old chapel, high on the rocks above, whence Cappella gained its name, rang out the Angelus. The heat—it was March—was considerable, according to English notions. Jemima sat down on a broken bit of wall and waited, her shoes white with dust after a couple of yards of the sun-baked road.

"Waiting long?" inquired Leo affably, nearing her, his light easel in one hand, his sketching tools in the other. He sketched rather well, just as he played the violin rather well, and did a variety of other things with a similar avoidance of superlative excellence, a characteristic that gained him a great many friends; it left no cause for jealousy on the part of other amateurs, some of whom could do things even better.

"No, not long. There was half a column more than usual in that daily abomination," replied Jemima, looking at him with approving eyes. She greatly admired this brother of hers, possibly because he was the only one she had.

"What did the heroine do to-day?" asked the young man with a laugh, sitting down beside her.

"Got carried off by the villain in an aeroplane just when she was saying her prayers before a wayside shrine."

"Didn't she say 'Unhand me, sir-r-r!'—they generally do, you know?"

"Something of the sort. I only wish the villain would never bring her down again!" said Jemima viciously.

"What's the number of the chapter?"

"Thirty-three, and there are usually about ninety chapters, but"—with an air of resignation—"if this piece of idiocy ended it would be succeeded by another just as bad."

"I cannot imagine how father can listen to the trash," observed Leo, meditatively.

"That is just what I've been saying to myself this very morning. If he were a stupid person one could understand it, but no one could call father stupid."

"I should think not," with decision. "How do you like my sketch?"

He held out the sketching-block, and the two heads bent over it. A man also equipped with sketching materials, but equipped in the style that means serious work, came along the road Jemima had lately traversed, and stopped to make a rapid outline of the two figures on the broken wall. He was a strongly-built man, looking about thirty, with a face tanned to almost copper colour. He removed his hat as he passed the brother and sister, showing a thick crop of fair hair strangely out of keeping with the tanned face. The two looked after him with interest.

"Scots wha hae, etcetera," hummed Leo, nodding in the direction of the disappearing artist.

"Why 'Scots'? I don't believe the man is Scotch?" queried his sister.

As a matter of fact he wasn't.

"He was sandy. All Scotchmen are sandy. Fact!"

"Sandy! He was nothing of the sort! How silly you can be, Leo! You are like the man who said all Frenchwomen had red hair!"

"Suppose you had to describe the colour of that interesting stranger's hair—I don't mean the Frenchwoman or the man who said what you said he said—I consider that is neatly tautological. Where was I?"

"Lost in a fog of words, as usual. The man who passed us had hair of the very lightest brown—well, it was what is usually called 'fair' hair."

"Exactly. People say that out of politeness when they don't want to speak the truth. I—being a worshipper of veracity—say it was sandy."

"It wasn't. I wonder where he is staying."

"If at the 'Three Mules' he will be poisoned; if at the 'Golden Cup' he will be plundered; however, there is nowhere else that he can be staying. One of those two hostelries must be battening on him."

Cappella's one and only street had an inn at each extremity. That street was narrow; it was also malodorous as only an Italian street knows how to be. It was eminently picturesque, however.

"I was looking for you this morning. I have a piece of news to give: wanted to tell it before you went to read to the pater. Where were you?"

"With mother, writing her letters for her. It's her day for writing to grandmamma. What's the news?"

"It's good news," said Leo reflectively.

"Tell it then," impatiently. "Don't be aggravating, Leo."

"What will you give me for it?"

"Nothing. You have the soul of a—a—pedlar."

"Or a Cappella boatman."

"Or no soul at all. I don't believe you have any news. You are just chaffing."

"Am I? How long is it since we left our native shores and took to globe-trotting?"

"Let me see, I was seven—I could just read well, I know; I wish"—with a sudden recollection of the serial—"that I had never learnt to read at all!"

"Your education would have been even more defective in that case than it is, my dear sister. You, as with your usual accuracy you have just said, were seven, and I—though the fact is of less importance—was just twelve. You are now nearly nineteen, and I shall be twenty-five next birthday."

"That is twelve mortal years we have been roaming Europe," asserted Jemima resentfully, "and never stopping at any place where it was possible to make a friend."

"Beyond a liberal education in foreign tongues—confined to the vernacular—I can ask for the little wooden gun of the gardener's daughter, or—which would be distinctly improper—the scarlet stockings of the postman's grandmother—in seven modern languages—beyond that advantage, there has been a good deal wanting in the way of mental equipment."

"Don't use long words, Leo. What's the news?"

"Doctor McGregor came from Milan yesterday."

"Oh, Leo, how tiresome you can be! Don't I know it? Didn't he dine with us?"

"He did. He also told the pater that a summer in England—native air, and all that sort of thing—would be the best thing for him."

"Leo! And we are going? Oh, say we are going, Leo?"

"We—are—going."

Jemima rocked herself to and fro in a very ecstacy of delight.

"No more living in trunks! No more everlasting new faces! No more mosquitoes——"

"Not to mention other insufferably familiar insects!"

"Perhaps even—no more 'Daily Cackler'!"

"My dear child, do not hug that flattering delusion to your innocent soul; now and then you have escaped that piece of literature owing to the misdoings of the Italian post-offices. The 'Daily Cackler' has its foot on its native hearth-rug in England."

"I don't care. When are we going, Leo?"

"Soon."

"To Trevyck?"

"No. To London."

"More hotels?"

"No. The granny is taking us in, at any rate for a time; but we shall go down to Trevyck in June or July. You will get a London season, Jemima—think of that!"

"I'm a nice sort of object for a London season," returned the girl, distastefully. "I hope grandmamma will pronounce me unfit to be seen."

"It is possible that such a verdict may be passed," replied Leo sedately, with mirth dancing in his eyes as he looked at the speaker's beautiful, animated face.

"However," said Jemima hopefully, "as old Barbara used to say, I shall 'pass in a crowd.' In a great place like London there must be all sorts of girls."

"And you will have the cousins for your guides in matters social, you know."

"Of course; and they are all older than I am. I'm glad we shall go down to Trevyck in the lovely English summer. I remember Trevyck quite well. It will just be heavenly to be in one's own country, in one's own house."

"With an English cook to spoil one's own victuals, and the perpetual obligation to carry one's own umbrella!"

"How hateful of you, Leo! I abhor people who run down their own country!"

"England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!" quoted the offender dramatically, gathering his sketching materials together. "It is about time we made tracks, Jemima. If you are a good child, I'll take you on the water presently."

They went off together through the sunshine, a gay, handsome, irresponsible pair, whose comradeship was perfect, and whose enjoyment of life was intense.

As they neared the house, a rambling, two-storied stone building standing fairly high above the sea, and tapestried with climbing plants, they could see the tall, faultlessly-dressed figure of their father pacing slowly up and down the terrace. He turned as they approached.

"How are you this morning, sir?" inquired Leo: this was their first meeting since the previous day.

"Better; yes, decidedly better," was the reply. It was the answer invariably given by Mr. Trevyck when such a question was put. His surroundings would have been surprised had there been any other.

He put his hand into his son's arm, and Jemima thought—as she often thought—what a strikingly handsome pair they were, though her father's dark hair was thickly streaked with grey, and his waxen pallor contrasted strongly with Leo's healthy tan; but there was the same erect carriage, the same finely-cut features, the same dark, luminous eyes, though, had Jemima been skilled in such signs, she would have seen a difference in their fire. A mortal disease was upon the elder man, and none of those about him knew that such was the fact. It was a secret carefully kept, shared only with his doctor; a fact which he did his best to believe was a mistake in the diagnosis of his malady made by the great specialists whom he had consulted, though all the while he knew it to be the truth.

"Has Leo told you we are going home, Jemima?"

"Yes, father. I am glad."

"The heat is becoming a little oppressive; and—Trevyck will be all the better for having its owners back again," said Mr. Trevyck. Then silence fell, and Jemima felt—as she always did when with her father and Leo—that she was in the way, and she went off to find her mother.

That lady was never visible until mid-day, if then. There was no rushing in upon her without permission at any time. Mrs. Trevyck exacted a considerable amount of deference from her surroundings. Her maid informed the inquiring Jemima that her lady was in the small drawing-room, and there her daughter found her.

The persiennes were closed, making a soft twilight, just enough light being in the room to allow the occupant to see to read. Viewed from the door, the lady reclining in an

easy-chair, her feet on an embroidered cushion, looked about twenty. A closer inspection removed that impression. Jemima went up to her mother and kissed her hand in the pretty foreign fashion. Mrs. Trevyck objected—for substantial reasons—to any other kind of salutation.

"My dear Jemima! What a complexion you have! You really become browner daily! You must try to get your skin into proper order before we go home—I suppose you know we are going?"

"Yes, mother—when?" Jemima sat down in a window seat.

"Oh, not before Easter. Your cousins are sure to be very well-brought-up girls; I do not know what they will think of you, my dear child, if you go there looking like a gipsy or a negress."

"I shall make a refreshing contrast to them, mother dear."

"Do not be flippant, darling. It is not at all good style for a girl to make attempts at smart speeches. What your dear grandmamma will say to the way you have been educated I really am afraid to think."

"What is the matter with my education, mother?" asked the girl bluntly. She secretly felt that if anyone was to blame for defects in that quarter it certainly was not herself, and slightly resented the remark. "I had plenty of lessons from Leo's tutor as long as he was with us. Mr. Grenton taught splendidly, too."

"There are other things," began Mrs. Trevyck feebly; "your father has such extraordinary views on some things."

"On what things, mother?"

"Oh, my dear child, what a very abrupt manner you have!"

The door opened, admitting Leo, not a little to his mother's relief. The particular deficiency in Jemima's—and for the matter of that in Leo's education also—likely to cause horror in the soul of grandmamma, Lady Gorreston, was one Mrs. Trevyck felt great difficulty in discussing.

"My father asked me to tell you, mother mine," said the young man, "that he has just found out that Mr. Peter Bretton—you remember old Colonel Bretton, father's chum?—well, this is his son—is now staying in the place; and he has sent him an invitation to dinner."

"For to-night?"

"Yes. Do you good to see a fresh face, mother mine."

The eyes of Leo and Jemima met; the girl's asked a question.

"Quite so, Jemima," said her brother with mock gravity; "it is the mysterious stranger."

CHAPTER II.

Social intercourse had scarcely existed for the Trevycks during those twelve years of wandering by easy stages from

one place to another. No sooner had he heard of a place whose climatic conditions were likely to be beneficial to him than Mr. Trevyck was feverishly anxious to get to it. Often —indeed, generally—the place recommended was, like Cappella, some out-of-the-way, obscure little spot, with nothing but its beautiful surroundings to recommend it. Jemima, whose reading was severely supervised by her father, disliked the only style of book he permitted her to read, the "society" novel, of the type wherein, after a proper amount of indecision, and psychological twaddle, the chief characters pair off like partners in a dance. The girl's intellect was too virile to relish the food presented to it; during the years that clever, elderly Mr. Grenton had spent with them she had done her best to share Leo's studies, and was keenly conscious of her deficiencies.

She looked at herself disparagingly as she dressed for dinner, with the belated assistance of Larkins, Mrs. Trevyck's maid.

"Do I look very sunburnt, Larkins?" she asked anxiously.

"You are not sunburnt, Miss Jemima; it's just a becoming tan," asserted that functionary approvingly; "and that rose-coloured frock makes you look like a picture."

So thought Peter Bretton, looking anything but picturesque himself in the dinner garb of the civilised Englishman.

"He looks a gentleman, every inch of him," was Jemima's mental observation, glancing across the dinner-table at the guest, who was making himself agreeable to his hostess; "but he certainly is better-looking in his rough clothes."

Then she caught Leo's eyes upon her, and that ill-bred young man's lips formed the word "Sandy!"

It was a pleasant dinner. The guest talked well, and had plenty of interesting news to give of people and places well-known to his hosts. After dinner the party went out upon the terrace. The air was heavy with perfume from flower and shrub, rising like incense to heaven, as though the earth gave thanks for the glorious sunshine of the passing day. Jemima leaned over the parapet, looking away across the many-tinted waters of the most beautiful of seas, and lost herself in dreaming of what the future might have in store for her. Leo's voice beside her presently roused her.

"Mr. Bretton is just going, Jemima." She turned to see the guest standing with Leo. "Is it too dark for him to see the grotto, do you think?"

"No. It will be dusky, but that makes it look mysterious," she replied.

"Trevyck has aroused my curiosity about it," said Peter Bretton, "and I also have an idea that it is just what I want for a background. I have permission to paint it from Mrs. Trevyck."

Mr. Trevyck's man had come up to Leo while the guest was speaking.

"Show the grotto to Mr. Bretton, Jemima, will you?" said Leo. "You'll excuse me for a few minutes, Bretton? My father wants me."

"It is a good climb," said Jemima; "steep, rather, I mean. It is really a picturesque little place."

"I like Cappella," said Bretton. "This is my first visit."

"Ours too. We have stayed here longer than we have ever stayed anywhere, though. Father bought this house; he liked it as soon as he saw it."

"And you—do you like Cappella?"

They were climbing up a greenery-entangled, fairly broad path through the myrtle bushes at the back of the house. Jemima paused for an instant to consider the question.

"Yes, I do like Cappella," she said at last, "though it is not in the least exciting."

Her companion laughed.

"Exciting is the very last term to apply to it. I was only to-day thinking what an act of extreme self-denial it must be for a scholar like the good padre to bury himself and his talents in such a place."

The girl looked up at him inquiringly.

"The padre? You mean my father?"

"No. I meant the good priest, Father Sebastian."

"Oh, really. I do not know him." The tone was utterly indifferent. "Take care just here, Mr. Bretton. Some of the stones in the path are loose."

"It has been a pilgrimage path, I should think." The speaker stopped and looked back on the wealth of flower and tree below them. "One finds many such in Italy, as you doubtless know."

"Yes; it is a pilgrimage path. The people were dreadfully concerned when they knew the place was sold; they imagined that my father would not allow them to come here any more. They come on some saint's day or other once a year, and the former owner of this place always allowed it."

"Mr. Trevyck allows it?"

"Yes, of course. It is quite a pretty sight; banners and garlands, and all sorts of things, to say nothing of the women's gala dresses. It would have been a great pity to stop it."

They had reached a broad, moss-grown paved path now, on level ground; at the end in a denser shadow something gleamed faintly white.

"That is the grotto."

It was a small ancient building of grey stone, covered with an abundance of climbing plants. The little sanctuary was semicircular in shape; three broad low steps led up to it. The two ascended the steps; Jemima noticed that as he did so her companion bared his head.

"Father—who is a good judge of such things—says that this statue is really very fine." Jemima indicated the only thing the grotto contained. "It is a statue of the Virgin

Mary, and must be quite old. The people think a great deal of it; it was nearly hidden in flowers on the pilgrimage day."

The statue and pedestal on which it stood were of yellow marble, of that peculiar glowing yellow that makes the fanciful observer think that the hard stone must have drunk in the very sunshine itself. The sculptor's work had been done with loving reverence; the fair, sweet face of the Immaculate Mother, draped in nun-like swathings, was full of a divine compassion as she looked down upon the two standing before her; the Holy Child in her arms stretched His Hands towards them.

"It is a beautiful statue," said Bretton softly. "No wonder that the people love it."

"Italians have such a keen appreciation of art, so father says, though one would not think so to look into their awful little chapels. Have you seen the Cappella synagogue, Mr. Bretton?"

The man looked at her inquiringly, not that he needed any explanation of her meaning.

"I mean that ugly little chapel high on the rocks?"

"Yes. I have seen it."

"It is very, very old; the building itself is well enough, but the decorations are killing! Never have I seen such daubs of pictures, such artificial flowers, such tawdry finery!"

"You are not a Catholic, I think? No. It must be very trying to have to go such a distance to an English church. The nearest is eighteen miles away, is it not?"

Something—she could not have defined what—in the tone displeased the hearer.

"I really do not know where the English church is, and if I did, or if it were next door, it would not matter. I should not go."

"No?"

Jemima felt intensely irritated. She was unwilling to reply, though she knew no reason for that unwillingness.

"We do not go to church, to any church," she said with a feeling of defying something or somebody that was very refreshing to her spirits. "All this superstitious nonsense"—with a little gesture towards the statue—"is very nice and poetical—for the ignorant masses, but——"

"You are quoting, are you not?"

This man was absolutely rude! She *was* quoting, too, quoting Mr. Grenton.

"I have an idea of my own occasionally," she replied stiffly; then, her innate truthfulness coming to the front, "but that was a quotation—from Leo's old tutor."

"Grenton, was it not?"

"Yes. You knew him?"

"Very slightly; but my father knew him rather well. Grenton's father was a parson."

"How odd that he should be a clergyman's son," exclaimed Jemima. "He always said that all religious systems were utter folly."

"I know. He was an atheist."

"We are atheists, too," remarked Jemima serenely. "Father has not allowed us to learn any dogmas, and things of that kind."

"Atheism means disbelief in the existence of a God, doesn't it?" asked Bretton. They had left the grotto, and were standing outside at the foot of the steps.

"Yes, I suppose it does," replied Jemima, again with that queer feeling of defiance, and as she spoke she glanced up quickly at her companion and saw in his dark blue eyes a gleam of something like dislike, repulsion; not at all the kind of look the young woman was accustomed to see in eyes masculine; and just then, to her great contentment, Leo appeared at the end of the path.

She walked soberly beside her brother as they accompanied their guest back to the "Three Mules," and allowed the two men to do all the talking. The conversation was chiefly about pictures, Leo's chief hobby for the time being.

"I'm sorry you will not let us put you up at the Villa," said Leo, when at length they paused before the dingy old inn. "They are not renowned for the excellence of their cuisine in there," nodding towards the building, "to put it mildly."

"Oh, my wants are extremely few in number, and my tastes of the simplest," laughed Bretton, "and I like living in the style of the people of any country wherein I may be rambling; but it is very good of you to trouble about me, and I am proportionately grateful."

His glance and tone included Jemima in the thanks, but that young lady made no response, rather to her brother's surprise.

"Well, if you change your mind, or find the 'Mules' unbearable, come to us; we shall be delighted to have you," said Leo cordially, as they said farewell.

"I'm extremely glad that man did not accept the invitation," remarked Miss Trevyck, with severity, when the two were on their way home again. "I don't like him at all!"

"You don't? Why, I think he is about one of the nicest fellows I've seen for some time. Why don't you like him?"

"He gives himself airs."

"Airs?"

"Don't be such an echo, Leo. Yes, AIRS!"

"Why, a more unassuming, pleasant——"

"I don't care. I do not like him, and—you were perfectly right in what you said about his hair. He *is* sandy."

Whereupon Leo went off into fits of laughter.

"Perhaps when you have done behaving like an idiot, you will tell me what you are laughing about?" observed Jemima with dignity.

"My dear child! How has Bretton managed to offend you?"

"I did not say that he had offended me. I merely remarked that I do not like him. You do not expect me to fall upon the neck of every stranger you may take a fancy to, do you?" inquired Jemima angrily.

"My beloved sister! I should consider such a course of action most unladylike, and should promptly punch the embraced stranger's head."

"Leo! What an idiot you can be!"

"I can—at times. But to return to our muttons; our new acquaintance is decidedly not sandy. There is"—with an appearance of profound reflection—"a certain touch of gold in those abundant locks of his that absolutely removes them from the imputation of sandiness. My sister—cherished partner of my joys and devourer of any chocolate I am ever lucky enough to possess—I acknowledge my defeat. Sandy, the stranger, who has just eaten our bread and salt, is not!"

"His hair may be pea-green for anything I care about its colour!" asserted Jemima with energy; "and—I—do—not—like him!"

(To be Continued.)

Sonnet.

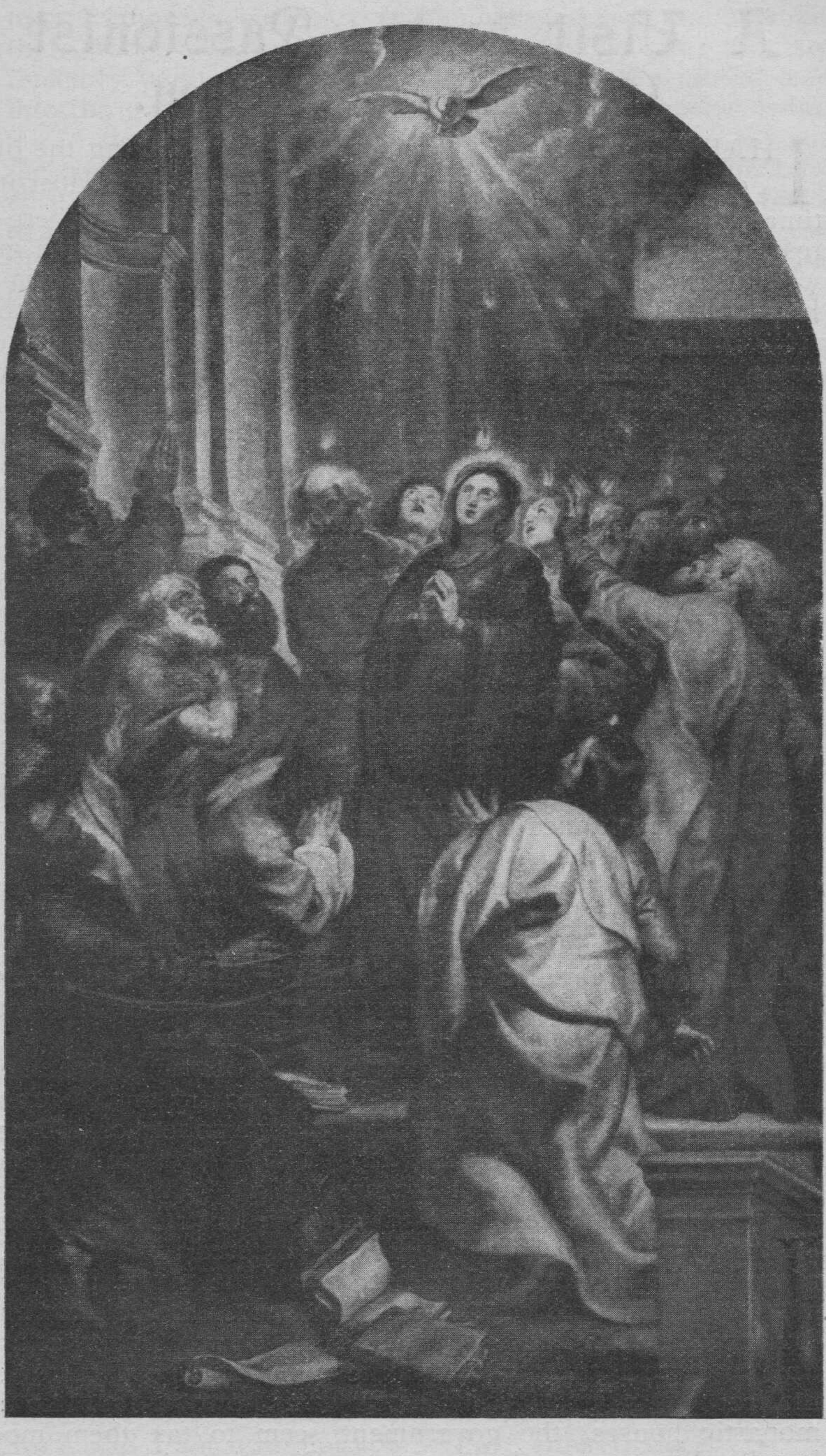
Not when refulgent He from death did rise;
Nor when a captive slavery was led
By Him, His earthly mission being sped,
While in the heav'ns He vanished from our eyes;

Nor when the blast of Doomsday trumpets dread
Shall clang and thunder over earth and skies,
And 'midst the clouds our human gaze espies
Him, Him in splendour, Judge of all the dead;

Not guiséd thus my Lord do I love most,
Though in transcendant glory He is clad
—The angels then best love Him and are glad—

But when all bruised, a wondrous holocaust,
He hangs in blood and anguish for my sake,
With mighty love my heart doth then nigh break.

JOSE MARIA DE NAVARRO.



THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST. [*Rubens*

All these were persevering in prayer with . . . Mary the Mother of Jesus . . . And when the days of Pentecost were accomplished they were all together in one place . . . and there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. . . . (Acts I and II.)

A Visit to the Passionist Convent at Lucca.

I HAD always wished to visit Lucca, since reading the life of Gemma Galgani, and having heard that her most intimate friend was a nun in the Passionist Convent there I resolved two years ago to break my journey at Lucca on my way to England. As lay people are not allowed to live in a Passionist Convent without special permission from the Archbishop of Lucca I got leave before quitting Rome and had a most cordial letter of welcome from the Mother President (the title given to the Superior of the Passionist nuns). I arrived at Lucca on the afternoon of a very hot day in June; the heat was oppressive; it is only those who have experienced a real Italian summer that know what it means to be out and about in the early afternoon, which was the time I chose for my short journey from Pisa—quite long enough for me, as I had been travelling all day and the railway carriage seemed a veritable bakehouse. In brief outline I must tell you something of the beauties of Lucca. It is a city entirely girded by a stout brick wall of closely-wrought and very perfect masonry, around which are planted avenues of shady trees, maples, acacias, limes and elms. From the station you enter the city by the Porta San Pietro, the first glimpse of which from outside is so entrancing, as it is entirely surrounded by hills and mountains, with the exception of a gap to the east. From the walls due south one gets a good view of the handsome aqueduct which brings water from the hills to the town. It is composed of 459 arches and is a good three miles in length. Lucca has ever been and still is a very religious city. To satisfy the spiritual wants of a population of some 22,000 souls there are about seventy churches and chapels, many of them still in use.

But I am wandering far from the subject of my pilgrimage, as I want in a very inadequate manner to try and describe something of the peace and wonderful atmosphere of holiness which I experienced during my—alas!—too short visit in the Passionist Convent of Lucca. On my arrival I was greeted by the Mother President and the Mistress of Novices (Gemma's life-long friend). Having entered the enclosure I received a real warm welcome from all the nuns: the community at that time consisted of seven professed sisters and four postulants. The house they live in now belonged at one time to some Franciscans, but the nuns have been there for the last four years; it is not their own, however, as, like all monastic houses, the government seem to tax them more heavily than any secular institute. Simplicity is the prevailing feature everywhere; their small garden with a few rough walks is all they possess outside their house, but fortunately, so as to shield them from the hot Lucca summers, it is entirely roofed over by trellis-work of vines, so that the

nuns cannot be overlooked by the many houses that surround their walls. The convent is of considerable size; the large refectory, with its stone floor and long wooden tables, leads into the garden, where the nuns recreate after meals, which are of the simplest kind. I asked to be allowed to eat with the community and begged that they would make no difference on my account. My first request was granted, but as to the second, well, they laid a tablecloth for me while they themselves ate off the bare boards. They gave me a tumbler to drink out of while they used mugs of commonest crockery. I was served with dishes of which they tasted not. There is strict silence in the refectory, save for the reading aloud, and in the observance of the silence I was allowed at least to imitate the community, although I took my turn in reading, as the book is passed from one to the other when the President rings a bell. The chapel is used only for those who wish to assist at the daily Mass said for the nuns at six o'clock; their choir is completely shut off, so that they can never see the tabernacle. To receive Holy Communion they kneel one by one at a small door at the side of the high altar, and having communicated each nun returns to her place in the choir while Mass is being offered. Being a visitor I was allowed to go where I wished, and although I always remained in the choir for Mass, during the day I used to go into the chapel, as to my mind one of the greatest penances of a Passionist nun's life is the giving up of the great source of consolation which it must be to her—that of looking at the tabernacle which holds her Lord and her God. But it is difficult to make these saintly sisters understand the sublimity of their own lives or how great are their sacrifices. Choir night and day, meditation and needlework give them constant occupation. They rise every night to chant the Divine Office for about two hours; I was allowed to join them. While the inhabitants of Lucca were deep in slumber these holy souls sang the praises of the Lord, and, as it were, made propitiation for the sins of many and stayed, how often, the avenging hand of God. They claim Gemma Galgani as their foundress. In one of her many visions Our Lord showed her the great esteem He had of the Passionist sisters, the glory He would derive from the new foundation in Lucca, and the good they would do there. It is notable that our late Holy Father, Pius X, named as superior of the new house precisely that nun of the Passionist Convent of Corneto to whom Gemma wrote the words: "Jesus will give you this consolation." Two choir sisters and one lay sister left the convent of Corneto for Lucca in March, 1905, two years after Gemma's death. There were eleven in the community in 1913, and I am sure many more have entered since.

Mother Gemma (Euphemia Giannini), who was the lifelong confidante of the holy girl, told me many wonderful things about her. It was she who wrote down the mysterious colloquies held between Our Lord and Gemma during her ecstacies; she used to observe a wonderful light reflected on the face of

the servant of God which seemed to radiate her whole being; and can we wonder that it should be otherwise, for Jesus Himself conversed with her and deigned to listen to the prayers and petitions of His faithful servant? Gemma, like the apostles, had the privilege of being taught by the Incarnate Wisdom Himself! Indeed, she has left her wonderful spirit of prayer and penance to her sisters of Lucca, for they are one and all filled with the love of God. Hidden from the world, they hourly make intercession for mankind before the Throne of God; they offer themselves as victims for the sins of mankind. Such is the life of these saintly souls: the Passion of Christ is the very atmosphere in which they live; their penances and their austerities must surely save thousands of souls from eternal ruin. To show how very dear they are to Our Lord's Sacred Heart let me quote from the life of Gemma a colloquy she had with Him, who, in order to excite the fervour of His servant more and more, showed her the great esteem He had of the Passionist sisters, the glory He would derive from the new foundation in Lucca, and the good they would do there. On one occasion He appeared to her and told her that the justice of His Heavenly Father had need of victims, adding: "How often have I not withheld it, presenting to Him a group of loved souls and generous victims! Their heroic acts, their penitential lives have restrained it. Now again I have presented Him with victims, but they are few." She asked Him who they were, and He said: "They are the daughters of My Passion. If thou only knewest how often I have seen My Father relent as I offered them to Him"; and He ended with these words: "Write at once to Padre Germano, and tell him to go to Rome and speak to the Pope of this desirable work; let him say that a great chastisement is threatened and victims are needed." It cannot but strike one that Our Lord in the above passage is referring to the present terrible war, and may we not hope that Gemma from her throne in Heaven is now pleading for the world even as her saintly sisters on earth are offering themselves as victims to stay the avenging Hand of Divine Justice? It is their most blessed and glorious privilege to stand by the Cross of Jesus with Mary His Mother, like the beloved disciple,

By the Cross their station keeping,
With the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last.

So deep a source of edification have the community of Lucca been to me that the memory of my happy visit spent within their convent walls will never fade away. Before leaving I visited Gemma's grave in the Campo Santo, outside the city: a very simple tombstone marks the place where her holy body rests; the last words of the inscription is a fitting summary of her innocent life:—

"Peace be to thee, oh sweet soul, in company with the angels."

L. F. L.

Our Rich Relation.

I KNOW of nothing that lends a greater piquancy to life than to have a rich relation from whom you have "expectations." Perchance, reader, you have one yourself, though goodness knows they are a rare species. Isn't it exciting? Do you think that your hopes will ever crystallize into anything—or will you have put your foot into it before they have had time?

Uncle Thomas is my wife's rich uncle and our most respected relative. I confess we have expectations from him; and in the light of this admission you will see how his most casual visits are of primary importance to us.

I shall tell you about last Tuesday.

Last Tuesday, after I had come home from my office, I was sitting in the window reading the evening paper by the last rays of daylight, when looking up I saw Uncle Thomas fumbling at our garden gate. It is one of those which locks in the barnacle style—whenever it does lock.

I went out on the landing softly, and called in a low voice to my wife, who was in the kitchen cooking the dinner.

"Molly!" I cried cautiously, "Here's your uncle!"

Getting no reply, save an angry hissing sound, I went hurriedly to the kitchen.

"Molly," I said again, "your uncle, my dear! He's at the door by this. There's the knock! Come on!"

"How can I go like this?" said Molly excitedly. "The old crank! He's always sure to come at the wrong time. I must tidy myself. Bring him into the dining-room—there's no fire in the drawing-room."

While saying this she flung off her apron and ran up the stairs.

"Don't forget to lock the children into the top back room, dear," I called after her.

I opened the door nervously.

"Ah," said Uncle Thomas, "How are you, my boy? All well?" And he filled the hall with his large, jolly presence.

But I know his jolliness for a delusion and a snare, and I was not betrayed into familiarity

"Splendid, sir, splendid," I replied. "I needn't ask you—you look well. Won't you take off your overcoat and come in to the fire?"

"Take off my coat?" he echoed. "I don't think so, my boy. I *don't* think so. I know this house, and the airy currents that go whistling through it. H'm"—and he smiled bitterly—"I know your jerry-builts."

By this time I knew that he had had difficulties with the garden-gate.

We sat down by the fire.

"A good screen," I remarked. . . .

"Screen!" exclaimed my relative. "Screen! The very sight of screens irritates me. I hate these coddling habits. I never indulge in them. I am no senile hypochondriac, Sir, with one foot in the grave, as some people seem to imagine."

And he fixed me with his eye, as if he would read my very soul in my expression.

Whereupon I tried to turn the conversation.

"Very cold to-day," I said with a shiver. "A bitter wind."

"Cold," he replied with great cheerfulness, "but seasonable—quite seasonable. We have nothing to grumble about—nothing."

"Indeed no!" said I, falling in with his humour. "On the whole, I think cold weather is the healthiest and most pleasant.

"I don't agree with you there," said uncle. "It may be so for the young and active, but the death-rate among the old is always highest in severe weather."

On this I thought it wise again to turn the conversation.

He caused a diversion himself by standing up to peel off his overcoat. He panted a good deal over the operation.

"Lord!" he said, "What stuffy houses these are! I wonder how people live in them. Not a breath of air anywhere. And the low ceilings are so depressing."

I tried to soothe him a bit.

"The ceilings are certainly a bit low," I acquiesced. "But then, what an improvement! Modern conveniences . . ."

"Don't talk to me about your gimcrack improvements!" he interrupted. "For a few three-and-sixpenny electric bells you are deprived of breathing space in your living-room. I think the middle classes are disgracefully housed. I was often thinking that it would be an act of real charity to endow a scheme for the Improved Housing of the Middle Classes."

As he said this he brightened up considerably from pure interest in his own idea, and was about to dilate further on it, when I begged him to excuse me while I let my wife know that he was here. We do not encourage our relative to think about Endowment Schemes for no matter what charitable purpose.

I found my wife struggling into an evening blouse.

"Hurry, my dear," I said, "your uncle will get impatient."

"Let him!" said Molly, whose face was red and angry-looking from a recent scrub.

She pinned on a piece of jewellery and patted her blouse.

"I hope, darling," she then went on in a more amiable voice, "you didn't leave him with the gaslight in his eyes or sitting in a draught?"

"No," I replied, "I was careful to leave the oil lamp with the green shade at his back, and he is out of the draughts unless he changed his position since I left the room."

"If he did," said Molly in alarm, "he's sure to have got the chair with the broken leg! Fly, dear, fly, or we are undone!"

I hastened to join our relative once more—only to find him sniffing the air.

"Cabbage?" he said, sniffing tentatively. "Or is it cauliflower or Brussells sprouts? They're all equally maladorous in the cooking. Ah!"

He walked over to the window which he threw open to its fullest extent, and began taking in deep breaths of cold, fresh air.

"What a relief!" he said.

Rich relations are always blunt.

Meanwhile I, with a savage aspect and an assumption of of an equal disgust, said I wondered what they were about in the kitchen, and I went to see.

Of course there is no "They" in that region. The rise in prices combined with the Insurance Act have forced us long ago to dispense with the services of even a small maid. But we have never allowed our relative to know this. He thinks it criminal for people to let themselves down.

I now hurriedly snatched off a pot of cabbage which was bubbling up in green seething foam and extinguished the offending vegetable in the kitchen sink. A steak and a savoury onion, which were just beginning to emit an appetizing fragrance, I consigned to the ash-bin, where I smothered their cries, so to speak, beneath shovelfuls of the all-obliterating ash.

"A pity!" I said ruefully to myself. "But nothing to what is at stake—ha!"

Scarcely waiting to smile at my own poor joke, I locked the kitchen door and ascended once more into the avuncular presence.

By this time my wife had appeared.

"Why did you not let me know sooner that Uncle Thomas was here?" she said in a gently upbraiding voice.

"But . . . but—" I faltered, and then stopped.

"And what on earth are they about in the kitchen?" she continued. "Uncle Thomas says the air was quite unpleasant. It is really annoying."

Whereupon she, too, made a show of disappearing to the kitchen regions for a few minutes.

By the time she came back the atmosphere had cleared a bit, and Uncle Thomas was induced to take his nose in from among the ivy-leaves which cluster round the window.

"Of course, uncle, you'll stay for dinner?" said the reckless woman. "Stay and have pot-luck with us."

I breathed once more when he waived the invitation.

"Thanks," he said. "But I have to catch a train."

Anyhow, he was pretty safe to go. The old *gourmet* knows the wine—the Greenland Burgundy—which is decanted at our modest table.

My wife tried to coax Uncle Thomas into a cheerful mood.

"'Pon my word, uncle," she said casually, "I never saw you looking better. You seem to be quite over that little touch of gout."

Thus disguised, a cross between a German student and a gamekeeper, I proceeded to the butcher's, only to find that the steaks were all gone and that I must have chops—of which I bought six pounds.

"Oh, my *love*!" said my wife (who never loses her temper), "and I said a sirloin!"

"But no matter, dear, no matter," she went on, "go up now and talk to Uncle Tom. I am sure he is tired of the children."

He was. All the time dinner was being prepared he spoke about the subsidizing of State Homes for the rearing of children. This is no new subject with him, but one which invariably follows the introduction of our five olive-branches.

In an astonishingly short space of time Molly appeared with the chops and mashed potatoes.

But it turned out that Uncle Thomas never eats chops. They are most unwholesome food—only fit for ostriches!

With uncanny cheerfulness (he is used to a seven-course dinner) he said he would do very well with the potatoes alone.

We proceeded with the meal in oppressive silence broken now and then by my wife's cheerful monologue. This in its turn was interrupted at length by little Máire who, with feminine intuition, guessing all was not right, broke into loud reproachful wails, and looking, half in horror, half in defiance, at Uncle Thomas, refused to be comforted.

Thus we broke up, and our relative refusing an offer of tea, departed.

My wife is no ordinary woman. If she were she would have broken down and sobbed her heart out on my waistcoat; in which event I, too, would have given vent to my feelings in another manner, known to, but never printed by, the printer. But she did nothing of the kind.

Instead, she cast warning glances from me to the children, saying as she hugged the youngest:

"Poor Uncle Tom. He's so impulsive!"

But I retired to the garden, where under the healing influence of the rain and darkness I tried to recoup my shattered nerves, wondering the while if the game were worth the candle.

EMILY DOWLING.

OUR LADY OF THE MAY.

O Flower of Flowers, our Lady of the May,
Breathe from God's garden of eternal flowers
Blessing, when we thy little children pray,
Let thy soul's grace steal gently over ours.
Send on us dew and rain,
That we may bloom again,
Nor wither in the dry and parching dust
Lift up our hearts, till with adoring eyes,
O Morning Star! we hail thee in the skies
Star of our hope and trust
Sweet Star, Sweet Flower, there bid thy beauty stay:
O Flower of Flowers, Our Lady of the May!

LIONEL JOHNSON.

Latin Memories.

Long sunshine fills the aching blue of heaven
  Dom'd over deserts shimmering bare and bright.
Far roll the lonely pastures water-riven
  Beneath the flooding sun's unmeasur'd height.
Low roofs scarce break the wild, wide empery
Bare-shining underneath the hollow sky.

Above the dead Veientines' empty tombs,
  Toucht by the late November sun to gold,
Crowning the ridge between the bosky combes
  The grey-white Isola, Farnese's hold,
Sees lonely copse and scrub and pasture hide
The many-gated city and her pride.

In colour'd kirtles clad and kerchiefs bright,
  Girls, women, bearing chestnuts on their head,
Brushwood or bales of clothes, 'twixt vale and height,
  Walk narrow winding paths with graceful tread,
And labour's immemorial dignity
Moves with them underneath the Latin sky.

Grey wrinkled hills are toucht with lilac bloom,
  A golden glow the distant snows uplights,
Rose-purple canopies of cloud uploom
  Above the naked Palestrina heights;
Hung in the measureless blue heaven glows
A plunging mountain-steep of ardent rose.

O rolling deserts rich in secret dales,
  High, hidden banks and lonely beds of streams,
Where never cease the larks and nightingales!
  O free, unfencèd wanderland of dreams!
O ring of mountains from Soracte hoar
To Cavo curving to the curving shore!

December dawns seen from Montorio,
  The shafts of light that splinter on the pine
Upstanding from the Alban ridge, the snow
  Upon the huge Gran Sasso's distant line,
And that first ray which strikes on sacred Rome
Full on the window o'er St. Peter's dome.

Soon will they know no more the vagrant feet
  That loved erewhile across these wastes to stray,
Escaping from the Roman dust and heat
  And dead monotony of yellow-grey,
To drink the sun and space and country-life
And gather strength to spend in after-strife.

How often from Janiculan hill-tower
  These eyes have wandered up the Apennines,
What time the clear autumnal sunset-hour
  Behind Pamfili's dark green-swarded pines
Sank thrilling thro' the radiant western sky,
Pure golden background of dark greenery;

Till gold to after-flush of rose gave place,
  And from the eastern mountains' windy wall
The wanness of chill death did swiftly chase
  The blue and purple, and a sombre pall
Spread o'er the distant snowfields' dazzling white
The hard grey horror of an Arctic night.

. . . . . .

They pass into the tale of things that were,
  They vanish with the years that ne'er relent;
Yet are they part and parcel everywhere
  Of sunlight, breeze, and starry firmament;
These overflowings of God's treasuries
Have passed into the dower of mine eyes.

H. E. G. Rope.

On Duty.

IT is in "Tom Sawyer," I think, that Mark Twain gives us a delicious picture showing how the sense of unrelenting duty converts into an irksome task something which if performed in a fit of free will would be a pleasure. We have depicted for us the youthful culprit being set to whitewash one of the family walls as a penance for his misdeeds. He starts to work gloomily and plods away, while a little group of his comrades and acquaintances collects around him—scorn on every lip. Soon, however, one of the small boys makes vocal the itching of his hands for the whitewash brush, for jealousy of the occupied one was beginning to boil over in him. The one obeying the imperious call of duty was adamant, till offers of marbles, tops, buttons, and other boyish currency tempted him to give way. There was no lack of eager volunteers when the first youth had tired of his self-imposed task, with the result that the whitewashing was soon complete, while the one to whom it had been set as a penance had as many toys and other youthful prizes as he could stow away. And, even his taskmistress rewarded him for his industry—which she declared to have surpassed even her wildest expectations!

We have here an exemplification of the chafing of the spirit under restraint, of the wish of the undisciplined one to work when and where the fancy dictates. Set us a task, saying, "Thou shalt do this," and we immediately feel a repugnance towards it, but forbid us to engage upon it and we at once begin to wonder whether the performance of it would not be much more pleasant than idleness after all! And thus it has come about that many people regard the doing of the things which they are bound to do as something very commendable, even heroic, whereas in theory they are most willing to admit that those who are bound must obey. They tend to confuse the obedience which is often but politic with the submission to the oft faintly-heard dictates that are at times galling to the spirit.

Duty, of course, implies obedience, but it implies a great deal more. The poet in calling it the Stern Daughter of the Voice of God admirably summed up all that it stands for and demands. The submission it requires concerns the individual conscience primarily, and any other controlling machine only secondarily. Remembering distinctly that we must not for a moment confuse it with the mere carrying out of specific directions passed on to us by someone authorised to do so, for that is only a fraction of duty, we have to concern ourselves chiefly with the higher motives with which it has to deal. It generally calls in the first place for some action on individual initiative, for tribulation of spirit necessitated by the curbing of the unwilling flesh, for a contest of contending

emotions, for the suppression or elimination of self-interest, for an attention to the welfare of others as against that of the individual, as well as for the display of courage, calmness, and perseverance. As Wordsworth says:

> He holds no parley with unmanly fears,
> Where Duty bids he confidently steers.

In these days when we are so inclined to associate battlefields with every mention of duty we tend to think that a monopoly of the grim adherence to the demands of personal obligations is possessed by the soldier, and the men who guard the ocean's highway. None shall gainsay the admirable sense of duty shown throughout the naval encounters and on the gory fields of Belgium and France; none shall think of those sturdy and self-sacrificing defenders of home and country as doing other than their highest duty courageously and well. But let us not forget that we have always, each and every one of us, a duty ready to hand. There is no need to search the highways and the byeways, for there is, every moment of our lives, some act or other, whose scene is quite close to us, yearning for attention and performance. It may be that a fellow-man suffers when we could at least alleviate his pain; it may be that we know one whom the world has misjudged or perhaps punished in error while we have at our elbow the information that would ensure his fair treatment, the wherewithal for his restoration. In a hundred ways we may be able to let a little more sunshine into the world, be it ever such a tiny beam—if anyone feels that he can say to himself that he sees no way in which he could aid even one being less fortunate than himself, then he had better utilise his first spare moment in trying to adjust the angle from which he surveys the humanity around him.

For we must remember that we are but units in the vast scheme of creation—atoms in the enormous mechanism of corporate existence. If society in general has its duties towards us, then at least equally so have we our reciprocal obligations towards the community. Wise is he who realises in a fashion more practical than that of the armchair soothsayer that the pre-eminent content arises from the sense of duty nobly complied with. But unfortunately so many of us carry our ballast of dross on the upper deck, as it were, that we are generally blind even to our own most vital self-interest. The trifling leisure, the doubtful ease which the shirking of some obligation, whose claim upon us is only of the moral order, gives is but a compensation as of Dead Sea fruit compared with the guerdon of absolute satisfaction which rewards a hundredfold each little effort in the path of obedience, performed in response to the promptings of the better nature that rarely dies within us. For these acts let us not look for thanks, for as Fielding writes:

> When I'm not thanked at all, I'm thanked enough;
> I've done my duty and I've done no more,

and it does not need much thought to imagine how duty can easily resemble virtue in being its own reward.

Playwrights pandering to the predilections of a populace inoculated with the germ of sentimentalism like to depict their alleged heroes as torn 'twixt love and duty. But of course neither the love nor the duty can ever be of a very serious nature, so if the gallery goes half into ecstasy when—after twenty seconds of racking thought—the lovesick one with a desperate, "Oh! hang duty," marches off the stage to seek one last interview with the maiden whose eyes are brighter even than the stars, it only means a poor score for the poor dramatist who was perhaps hard pushed to find something to "hold the attention of the audience." Even the gallery knows very well that any heroine worthy of the name would temper her reception of the duty-shirker with rather a good deal of the cold shoulder that cloaks contempt. Hence not a little of the "duty" that we hear of across the footlights is of the brand that is analogous to self-interest.

If the road along which duty points is at times a trifle narrow, and at other times not a little uneven, the surrounding country, to carry the simile farther, is of such a nature as to more than compensate for the ruggedness of the path. Who but a traveller utterly lost to all sense of the perception of finer things would prefer to travel on a broad and smooth highway leading through a region of waste and unhealthy aspect, rather than suffer a little inconvenience to be always in the neighbourhood of charming scenery, pleasant, though perhaps sometimes scant, company, and a prospect of ever increasing grandeur? For, even the slightest inconvenience in which obedience to the promptings of conscience involves us fails not to leave its fruit of contentment, of pleasurable satisfaction. To come back to Wordsworth:

> The primal duties shine aloft like stars;
> The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
> Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers.

These lines, conjuring up as they do the vision of childish innocence strewing blossoms in the pathway of some festive procession of tender joy, give one a glimpse of the beautifulness of soul we are wont to associate with the innate knowledge of duty well and nobly performed.

To most minds over-zeal in duty is one of the most offensive of traits, associated as it is with the prying officiousness of some menial who has become a slave to system, with the narrowmindedness of someone with paltry powers who gets lost in the wood of commonsense because there happens to be a few trees labelled, "Regulations," on the outskirts of it. Of a different type of perhaps misplaced duty did Shakespeare write:

> Never can anything be amiss
> When simpleness and duty tender it.

For, as we judge gifts not so much by their value as by the motive which we surmise has prompted their giver, so actions also are meritorious or otherwise according to the spirit in which they are performed. For thus the often incongruous offerings of childhood are accepted in the appropriate spirit which sees the motive at the back of the youthful mind, and likewise are the occasional awkward ministrations of good-intentioned, yet clumsy, folk appraised more for their planning than for their execution.

It is quite within the bounds of possibility that a man might be always alert to the call of duty, and yet be one of the most selfish of mortals—though it would of course be difficult to find such an individual, remembering always that our duty is of the more or less moral code. For it is conceivable that one should always act according to the dictates of his conscience just for the sake of inward peace, and pursue the matter yet further by being solicitous only for his own tranquility of mind. Did we but think more of our own mental contentment we would realise that neglect of legitimate obligations is one of the most frequent causes of its disturbance. Nevertheless, it is incomparably more healthy that we should reflect rather on the nobility of obedience to the clarion call of duty, on the manly spirit that rejects with contempt the seductions of the line of least (more often no) resistance.

THOMAS KELLY.

Almond Blossoms.

Buds that cannot brook the spring's delay,
Nor wait, in prudence, for the suns of May. . . .
But, while the snows still chill the countryside
Must spread, in haste, their coral petals wide. . . .
So are the songs this daring Poet sings,
Quick thoughts that ev'ry winter sunbeam brings
To life. . . O that, to One, those thoughts were fair
As almond blossoms in the wintry air!

LUCY M. CURD.

The Letters.

THE big car swung round a curve to the accompaniment of a series of weird, shrill sounds and came to a sudden stand. Colonel Marston started from a reverie that was not wholly pleasant and turned to the chauffeur.

"There's a man lying on the road," that personage explained hastily. "Another moment and we should have——" the speaker paused and jumped to the ground. His master followed.

"He has fallen from a bicycle," the chauffeur said, and a short examination of the prostrate figure showed that the man had received serious injury. He was unconscious and one arm hung limp.

"We must lift him into the car," Colonel Marston decided quickly. "In the village three or four miles back was'nt there a red lamp, Jasper?"

"Yes, sir."

"We can't leave the man here, and we can't take him on to Lindwood. We must go back."

"But you won't get to Lindwood in time——" the chauffeur began.

"Not in time for dinner," Colonel Marston interrupted. "That can't be helped now."

The injured man was placed in the car, which some minutes later stopped before a house that stood back some distance from the chief street of Little Walton. A vigorous pull at the bell brought a man to the door. He peered with the close gaze of the short-sighted at Colonel Marston.

"Why 'tis Marston!" he cried holding out an eager hand. "Don't you know Antony Fowler!"

"Tony! Yes, it is Tony! What on earth are you doing here?"

"Following my profession. At least I have taken charge of old Doctor Lyle's patients for twelve months. Who requires my services?"

Colonel Marston explained.

"Let us get the chap in. There's a room he can have, I believe," and Doctor Fowler darted towards the kitchen regions and returned in a minute or two.

"Yes, there's a room, my housekeeper says," he reported, and the man was carried in and Doctor Fowler made a quick inspection of his patient.

"Concussion, broken arm, two or three bad cuts. Where were you going, Guy?" he said.

"To Lindwood."

"Oh, there are high festivities for the coming of age of young Lindwood. Didn't know you were acquainted with Sir Charles."

"I met him in India, and last week in London. I promised to attend. I am afraid I won't get there in time for dinner."

"Share mine," Doctor Fowler suggested. "The fare's plain, but old Lyle's housekeeper can cook. And we can have a chat over old times. Heigho! I wish the college days were back!"

Colonel Marston smiled somewhat grimly. However, Tony's proposal was eminently satisfactory. He was by no means keen on the Lindwood visit. Four years previously he would have enjoyed a houseful of young people and the amusements of such. But a certain episode of which he had been thinking on the run down from London had given him a distaste for house parties.

"All right, Tony. I have a bag outside, but need I dress for dinner?" the Colonel questioned.

"Not at all! Why often enough I dine in my shirt sleeves. I'll show you a room," Doctor Fowler responded.

The two men enjoyed the well-cooked simple meal, and Doctor Fowler spoke of certain discoveries he had made which explained why he had given up a big London practice in order to have more leisure in which to verify them.

"Old Lyle had few patients, so I have plenty of time," the doctor ended. "By the bye, Guy, why did you exchange into a regiment bound for India? I thought you were genuinely attached to the King's Own."

"So I was. There was a reason."

"And I heard a rumour of an engagement hastily made and as suddenly ended. Was that the reason of the exchange?"

Colonel Marston nodded.

"Yes," he said. "I was engaged for a couple of weeks. The engagement wasn't made public, luckily."

"The lady broke it off."

"I did. Oh, here's the story, Tony. You probably never met her and never will. Nor shall I tell you her name. I thought I had forgotten, but to-day I find I was mistaken."

Tony gave a sympathetic grunt, and Colonel Marston resumed:—

"I wasn't a youngster when I became engaged to Betty, but I had never cared for any other woman or girl. She was twenty-four, beautiful, cultured, and intelligent. I met her at a country house, and in the same house a year later I asked her to marry me. She consented. There were a dozen days of perfect happiness. Then came disillusionment."

"How?"

"I hate to tell you, Tony. I learned that she had sold a considerable quantity of jewellery, and supposed that she had done so in order to provide all the articles brides should possess. Betty was poor. I made no remark. I had gone to London for a couple of days and returned unexpectedly one evening. The walk from the station was not long, and there was a short cut through the park. I took it, and came upon Betty and a fashionably dressed stranger. The stranger had

a green morocco case in his hand. Betty had in hers a purse of money. Twilight had come on and I stood bewildered for a second, doubtful whether I should speak or retire. Then Betty said:—

"'Are all the letters there?'

"'Yes. And are there two hundred pounds in that purse?' the man asked with a smile.

"'Yes, two hundred sovereigns. Give me the letters and go,' Betty said.

"I slipped away as the purse was exchanged for the morocco case, and I heard as I went the jingle of the coins. Later on I had a glimpse of Betty speeding back to the house. It was my last sight of her. I went back to London, exchanged at once into a regiment bound for India, broke off the engagement——"

"Without assigning any cause?" Doctor Fowler interrupted.

"Without assigning any cause." Colonel Marston repeated the words. "In India there was a bit of a skirmish, and after three years' service I was invalided home—worse luck!"

"What a fool you were, Guy!" Tony burst out. "There might have been some explanation. Why didn't you speak to Betty?"

"To humiliate her? No, no. Besides, after my knowledge perfect confidence between us would have been impossible. Probably the letters were merely foolish. Many girls write foolish letters."

"Has Betty married?"

"No."

"Have you met her since your return from India?"

"I have taken care not to. Now I may as well get off. There's to be a ball at Lindwood, so I had better put in an appearance. Hope your patient will improve."

"Don't know. He seems rather run down and a bit seedy."

"I'll call going back to town. Let me see. You can expect me about mid-day on Saturday. Wish it was Saturday, Tony."

When, exactly at noon on Saturday, the big car drew up before the house occupied by Dr. Fowler that gentleman was standing bareheaded on the threshold of the door. He waved his hand in excited fashion as Colonel Marston approached.

"What on earth is the matter with old Tony!" the Colonel thought. "He looks like a schoolboy out for holidays."

"Come in; come in, Guy!" Tony Fowler cried. "You can't guess! It is most wonderful!"

"What microbe have you discovered, Tony?"

"Microbe!" the doctor snorted. "This is you affair and Betty's—Betty Despard's. Oh, you thundering idiot!"

Worse terms of opprobrium rose to Colonel Marston's own lips as he listened to what Dr. Fowler had to tell.

"You have got to suffer some way," Tony said with quick remembrance, "but not through Betty. That chap you almost ran over is the man who had the letters. Not Betty's though. He's a thorough scamp. No, he's not going to die. I went through his pockets to try if I could discover who or what he was, and found them." The speaker placed a leather-covered case in Colonel Marston's hands. "Let me finish. I did not peruse the letters, but I understand they were written by your father. Wasn't he a Cabinet Minister?"

"Yes."

"Just so. Well, it would seem that he sold some position—public men have queer consciences sometimes—and this fellow got letters relating to the—the deal in his hands. It was these letters that Betty bought. She didn't wish you or the public to know of Mr. Marston's action. And Dale—that's the fellow's name—threatened to publish the letters. Now, Guy!"

"Are you sure, quite sure?" Colonel Marston asked in bewilderment.

"Of course I am. Dale has recovered and confessed all to me."

"But did not Betty get the letters?"

"No. The scoundrel kept the letters and gave Betty a case filled with other letters. And of course she could not speak. Dale says he was awaiting your return from India to sell the letters to you. Oh, he's a precious scamp! He was a journalist. I have got to see a patient."

It was some time ere Dr. Fowler came back to the room where Colonel Marston sat.

"It is an ugly story, Tony," he said.

"Oh, I don't know. Well, yes. Still one must make allowances. I wouldn't brood over it, Guy, if I were you. Throw the package in the fire and forget."

"One can't always forget."

"And there is Betty. Guy, I envy you. I once knew a woman with some of Betty's qualities. She is dead."

"Will Betty forgive me?" the Colonel said moodily and thinking only of his own affairs.

"Of course she will. Women like her forgive readily. Seek her at once, Guy."

"Yes."

"And settle the wedding day at once. I think you must pardon Dale. He won't get about for a time, poor devil! I think you are going to be a happy man, old fellow."

And when Dr. Antony Fowler visits the pleasant country house where Colonel Marston and his wife reside he sees proof of his powers of prophecy.

MAGDALEN ROCK.

BOOK NOTES.

Shall I be a Priest? by the Rev. Wm. Doyle, S.J. (price one penny, "Irish Messenger" Office), is a worthy companion to the same writer's excellent little manual on "Vocations." Written in an interesting and popular style, its description of the dignity and glories of the priestly state is sure to appeal to our generous-hearted Catholic boys. In these days, when such strenuous efforts are being made to recruit the youth of the country for the army, Chapter IV of Father Doyle's little book, dealing with the need for priests, is particularly timely: we are apt to forget that there is a more glorious army whose operations are hindered and delayed for lack of trained soldiers. This book, we have no doubt, will do much to fill up the want, by fostering the priestly vocation in many souls. It ought to find a place in every C.T.S. box in the country.

The Brown Scapular, by Rev. Berthold Mulleady, O.D.C. (Duffy and Co., Dublin), gives a very full and clear account of the origin and meaning of the well-known scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, as well as of the promises made by the Blessed Virgin in favour of those who wear the scapular devoutly. A useful appendix is added dealing with the indulgences attached to the wearing of the scapular, with scapular medals, etc. There are few pious Catholics who do not wear the brown scapular, and this little book, already in its second edition, is sure of a ready welcome among the multitude of clients of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It will give them much desirable information which they are not likely to find elsewhere in so handy a form.

In Thanksgiving.

Sr. M. M. (Newtownmountkennedy) sends, per Rev. Fr. Hugh, C.P., five shillings towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel. **B. B. (Dublin)** sends two-and-sixpence towards the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel in thanksgiving for a temporal favour received through his intercession. **R. B. (Slough)** forwards two shillings to be devoted to the funds for the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani. **T. McManus (Aughrim)** sends two-and-sixpence towards the fund for the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel, asking for a special favour through his intercession. **Florentia,** per Very Rev. Fr. Alban, C.P., Rector, St. Mungo's, Glasgow, sends ten shillings towards the expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani. **L. M. (Belfast)** sends three shillings towards the expenses of the Cause of Gemma Galgani in thanksgiving for favours received through her intercession.

The above donations, for which we are sincerely grateful, will be duly forwarded to the Postulator at Rome.

Contributions towards the expenses of the Causes of Blessed Gabriel and Gemma Galgani and favours received through their intercession will be gladly acknowledged in these pages.

TO OUR PROMOTERS.—In answer to inquiries made from time to time we think it well to let supporters of this magazine know that all our supporters and promoters participate in the benefit of four hundred and thirty-four Masses, specially offered every year for benefactors by the Fathers of this province, as well as in the prayers, penances and good works performed daily by all the members of the Congregation of the Passion.

A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross."

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

I. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.

II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity and truth; and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.

III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competitions will be held.

IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

I AM glad that I acted on the suggestion of a valued member and set a poetry competition for this month. The verses sent in by the competitors (what a host of poets and poetesses we have in the Guild!) if judged according to the high standards of literary critics might all be consigned to the uncongenial surroundings of the wastepaper basket, but to-day (these words are being written in the middle of April) they have brought into my heart the sunshine of the May, to my ears they have carried the call of the cuckoo, and have filled the air with the beautiful perfume of buttercups and woodbine and all the other humble wild flowers that summer brings us from the hand of God.

May Pictures.

Reading the verses of my boys and girls, many haunting pictures of the lovely May-time have come before my mind's eye to send a thrill of joy through my heart. I have seen the altars erected in every Irish Catholic home to honour the Mother of God; the murmur of many voices reciting her own sweet prayer, the Rosary; the May processions, with their thousands of innocent children filing past, proud and happy in the thought that Mary is their Queen, their Mother and their

Friend, that everything they ask of God in her name is sure to be granted, if it is for their good; the tinkling of the Benediction bell in the calm May evenings, the scent of the incense, the hundreds of bowed heads, the strains of the beautiful hymns—all these things have my young friends brought into my heart and mind by their simple songs, and right heartily do I thank them for having given me in April such tender memories of May.

My Post Bag.

The unexpected nearly always happens, and it has been so this month in regard to my post bag. I was almost certain that on account of the Easter holidays, that much-coveted portion of my possessions would be almost, if not entirely, empty. Imagine my surprise when I discovered in its capacious depths one of the biggest piles of letters I have had the pleasure of receiving for months past! And to add to my joy and delight, very many of the messages were from new members who, by various means, have been attracted towards the Guild. They are all here in front of me now as I write, and they represent not alone Ireland, but England, Scotland and Newfoundland. From the latter country the **Boys of St. Bonaventure's College,** St. John's, send a cheering and inspiring message, a clever acrostic written by one of their number, and a copy of their College magazine, *The Adelphian,* which is most interesting, well edited and turned out in first-class style. Listen to what they are good enough to say about ourselves:—"The beautiful stories in THE CROSS each month are most interesting. The excellent essays written by the members of the Guild show what good work it is doing on the literary side. But the devotion it has encouraged to Blessed Gabriel is no doubt much more important. We have experienced the efficacy of his intercession, especially in our studies." Another pleasing and welcome feature of this letter from over the seas is the list of new members' names which it contains. The newcomers are—**Edward Brennan, Ernest Duchaine, Fred Shortall, Joseph O'Driscoll, Willie Ryan, John De Lacey, Patrick Keegan, Patrick Murphy, John Power.** I bid them a hearty welcome, and I am sure every member of the Guild will join with me in wishing the boys of St. Bonaventure's success and God-speed in their work and in all their undertakings. **Florence Kathleen Burke** is a new member from England whom I welcome with pleasure into the Guild, because I feel certain she will do good work in spreading devotion to our dear Blessed Gabriel on the other side of the Channel. I hope to hear from her often and expect to see her name in the competition list before long. **Brigid Dillon** comes to us from Navan and is also heartily welcome. She is delighted with every issue of THE CROSS, and hopes soon to have the honour of wearing a Promoter's Badge. Our zealous young Belfast comrade, **Benedicta Kelly,** redeems her promise of a

month ago by sending along five new members from that busy city of the North, whose names are—**Katie O'Neill, Brigid Trainor, Katie Magee, Margaret O'Hare, Annie Close.** They bring good news with them, too. THE CROSS was completely sold out in Belfast last month—not an extra copy could they get anywhere. I hope my new recruits will work so effectively that the Northern newsagents and booksellers must stock more and more copies of our magazine every month in future. **May Allen,** of Arklow, qualifies for a Badge by sending along three additional recruits from her native town. They are **Mary Ellen Cullen, Kathleen Allen** and **Andrew Allen,** and I welcome them to the Guild. **Mollie Brazil** has been a reader of THE CROSS since the first number appeared, but only now has she plucked up courage to come into our midst. I'm sure the ordeal hasn't been such an awful one after all. Two more new members come to us from Fermoy this month, and are heartily welcome—**Mary Ellen Smaul** and **Mary Barry.** From Glanworth, another of Cork's fair towns, come **Mai Kearney** and **Lily Wilkinson,** and from the capital of that virile county **Eily Barrett** sends a demand for admission to the Guild that cannot be refused. I hope to have the pleasure of welcoming still more recruits from all three centres before very long. Other new members are **Vincent** and **Colette O'Byrne** (Rathmines, Dublin), **Mary Kate O'Reilly** (Belfast), **Willie McGinty** (Castlepollard), **Maureen Bolton** (Dublin), and **Mary G. Harris** (do.). I need hardly say that they are each and all as welcome as the flowers of the May-time. And now for a word with the "veterans." **Mollie Joyce** writes to say how delighted she is that so many new members are thronging into the Guild. "If recruits come rolling in like this for some time to come," she says, "it will soon be a strange thing to meet a boy or girl who is not a member of the Guild of Blessed Gabriel." May we all live to see the happy day, Mollie! **Lilian Mary Nally** sends me one of those kind and tender messages that I have come to watch eagerly for, and in her letter she thoughtfully encloses a little bunch of sweet-scented flowers to tell me that "spring has come to our mountain valley." My most cordial thanks to her for this and for her beautiful Easter card. May God bless all her life and hearken to her every prayer! **Margaret Ryan** is looking forward to the May processions, and I am sure many another young heart beats expectantly at the thought of those marches of the army of God. I plead with the members for a little prayer on my behalf at the May devotions. There are two letters from **Proinsias Mac Thighearnain,** who as usual pokes fun at my own poor self. I do not think anything the less of him on that account. His estimate of his own abilities as a poet is not as high as it should be, but his modesty in this direction will fade with the years—if he is to be judged by most other poets. I am very grateful for **May Allen's** kind offer of a bouquet of fresh flowers, but I should prefer to have them

sent in the name of the Guild to the Children's Hospital, Temple-street, Dublin. Never fear they will be appreciated there. Many thanks to my dear little friend, **Maureen O'Brien,** for her pretty Easter card. It was kind of her to think of me. Other letters are from **Rettie Seery** (from whom I was glad to hear, after a long silence), **Jennie Donegan, Josephine M. McEneaney, John Joseph Kennedy** and **Kitty Rice.** The following members were late for the April competitions—**Crissie Higgins, Katie Kavanagh** and **May Allen.** Members should strive to prepare their work early instead of waiting until the last moment. Give your composition a fair chance!

[Several competitions arrived, this month also, too late to be noticed.—Ed. THE CROSS.]

Badge Winners.

The pretty Badge, bearing the portrait of Blessed Gabriel, which is awarded to the member who brings five new recruits into the Guild, goes this month to Benedicta Kelly, 5 Hemsworth-street, Belfast, and to May Allen, Lamberton, Arklow.

Important.

All newcomers will please write a personal note to FRANCIS, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild.

The Victors.

In the competition for the best original May poem there was a good entry, and all the work was deserving of credit, though there were some very halting lines and a good deal of poor rhyming. I tried to keep the prize away from our Guild satirist (who is always poking fun at me), but his poem proved to be the best sent in and I was obliged to award him the volume. He is **Proinsias Mac Thighearnain,** 123 Upper Rathmines, Dublin. Very good verses were sent by Anna Curtin, Kathleen McCarthy, Mai Kearney, Mai Donovan, Mary Harris, Kitty Rice, Sheila Murphy, Rettie Seery, Mollie Brazil, Brigid Dillon, Lillie Wilkinson, May McCormack, Mollie Joyce, Eily Barrett, and a competitor who sent a verse entitled "Mary," but forgot to write either name or address on her competition paper.

Members under 12.

There was again a large entry in the little people's competition, and I was well pleased with all the letters. The prize is awarded to **May Morris,** Our Lady's Mount, Harold's Cross, Dublin. Special mention must be made of the letters sent by Mary Kate O'Reilly, Willie McGinty, Mollie Ryan, Annie Kavanagh, Maureen O'Brien, Benedicta Kelly, Brigid Trainor, May Allen, Mollie Boyle, Emily Moone, Eileen Somerville, Eileen Kavanagh, John Byrne, Ellie Pheland, and Una Kelly.

OUR NEXT COMPETITION.

I. For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

The last novel of Mgr. Benson, "Loneliness" (value 6/-), will be awarded for the best letter on "My Favourite Study at School." Everybody has some pet subject which is liked better than all other school tasks or studies, and I am sure there will be a big bundle of interesting competition letters next month.

II. For Members under 12 years of age.

So few boys take part in our competitions that I am tempted to ask the little people what their opinion of our boys is, so I am offering a handsome book prize for the best letter on the question: "Are the Boys of Ireland Lazy?" I am sure there will be many interesting opinions.

All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person as being the unaided work of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family), and must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the Office of THE CROSS not later than May 14th. All letters to be addressed:—FRANCIS, c/o THE CROSS, St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

Prize Poem.

A Welcome to the May.

Merry May-bells all are ringing,
Gurgling waters loudly springing,
Little songsters sweet songs singing
Their welcome to the May.

Woodland brooks glide gently babbling,
In them children knee-deep dabbling,
Farmyard geese a-near are gabbling
Their welcome to the May.

Sweet sunbeams fall from high, caressing,
And throw on golden heads a blessing:
'Tis spring-time, and they sing unceasing
Their welcome to the May.

But while with them there's peace in slumb'ring,
From other lands comes distant rumbling,
And shrines that once were God's are crumbling—
'Tis their welcome to the May.

But we that know no war-shout sending
Its cry of fear and hate unending
To hea'vn (or hell)—let us be lending
Our welcome to the May.

Merry May-bells, gurgling waters,
Woodland brooks, sweet Nature's daughters,
With ye we send a prayer that falters—
('Tis our welcome to the May).

A prayer for grace in a world of strife,
To teach us the way to the Truth, the Life,
To stifle the passions that still are rife—
'Tis our welcome to the May.

PROINSIAS MAC THIGHEARNAIN.

Our Patron.

(An Acrostic.)

Dear to us our youthful Patron,
Ever listening for our call,
Always granting our petitions,
Raising us whene'er we fall.

Benignly beams that saintly visage,
Laden with God's choicest grace,
Eyes, though downcast, speak the message
Shrined upon that modest face.
Son of Assisi! Umbria's glory!
Endeared to all who know thy name,
Doubted not the Saviour's story,

Gladly spurned both wealth and fame.
Alas! your years were few but fruitful,
Blest for heaven, unknown to fame,
Richer deeds are now accomplished
In the Master's vast domain.
Ever guard us, dearest Patron,
Lead us on, though life's boat toss,

Cast your loving eyes upon us;
Protect the readers of THE CROSS.

TERRA NOVA.

St. Bonaventure's College,
St. John's,
Newfoundland.